

Choral Harmony, No. 110. Revised Edition.

# THE QUAVER,

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Two octaves of the Staff Ladder, and a similar portion of the Movable *do* Ladder, contain all the solfa syllables or initials; the remaining portion in each case giving the notes *do*, *mi*, and *sol* only. The latter portion will be found useful as a *reading index*, for the help of pupils reading from the ordinary notes. For which purpose, set the *do* to the required line or space, and the positions of *mi* and *sol* are shown at the same time. This arrangement gives the reader the three principal sounds, and accustoms him to carry in his mind's eye the "backbone of the scale"; which done, the positions of the other notes are easily ascertained. It further avoids unnecessary multiplicity of signs or names to be looked at, and an occasional momentary glance at the diagram should enable the pupil to solfa from the ordinary unlettered staff with ease and certainty.

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## Gaetano Donizetti.

**A**MONG the Elysian group of magnificent lyricists who followed the brilliant Rossini, none has obtained a more merited prominence than Gaetano Donizetti. He was born at Bergamo in 1798, under the dominance of a lucky star, for his noble exemplar preceded him by only about six years. Educated at the Conservatory of Naples under the foremost scientists of his time, he had all that artistic training could supply, and he emerged upon the arena of professional life just when the Pierian stream of melody, which rose with the Swan of Pessaro, began to overflow its banks and spread fertility around. The birds of dismal omen who had soared and croaked in the preceding twilight had drooped their wings when the sunny brightness of the joyous "Barber" proclaimed the advent of a new day. Donizetti studied and admired the score, and, despite the denunciations of his pharisaic instructors, was not faithless but believing. Continuing his research, he read and analysed every Rossinian production he could obtain, and then matured his own method and formed his own style. That they differed little from those of Rossini, is admitted on all hands. Plainly, in inspiration, arrangement, and development the ideas of both are akin. The same voluptuous sweetness characterises the spirit of their melody, though in form the similarity is less, for in gorgeous embroidery and climatic intensification Rossini is undoubtedly supreme. Their harmonial and orchestral art are in substantial accord. They were both endowed with dramatic instinct in a high degree. They wrote with an ease which made them marvellously prolific, a clearness which made them universally intelligible, an emotional energy which secured them the sympathies of every class in every audience, depositing their gems in crystal caskets which, gleaming like diamonds on excited minds, became mirrored in delightful recollections. In the filiation of musical and poetic forms, they were pretty nearly abreast. They both belong to the priesthood of song, and are well entitled to wear the laurels and bear the mantle of genius.

For the precise line of demarcation between the artistic capacities of the two men, we should probably search in vain. How much Donizetti was indebted for his effects to the same translucent fountain of inspiration as his brilliant contemporary, how much to the study of his works, how much to his own organisation, how much to his better musical education and superior

literary ability, how much to popular culture and appreciation the new development had caused, it would be quite as futile to enquire. He was not a precocious child. He gave no preliminary indications of talent. When he began his musical career the fetters of the formalist were broken and the finest phrases of Rossini were echoing around. But though a pupil, he was neither a devotee nor an imitator of his great predecessor. Conscious, apparently, that those who attempt the experiment of Icarus are apt to meet his fate, he kept to his native vein—the specialty of his own musical organisation. Evidently he could not pour out his arias with the same dashing impetuosity as the Pessarite. While his harmonies smack of the school more and of nature less—his intervals are not so vocalistic—his modulations not so easy. Yet his melodical dialect is his own. And so is his operatic ideal. In the representative adaptation of sound to sentiment, situation, and sense, he was rather before than behind his master, and if he had not Janus-like vision which regarded melody and harmony at once—which felt their simultaneous progression—to the same extent as Rossini, he had a breadth of understanding which kept him away from the ineffective tenuity of the old musicians on the one hand, from the labyrinthine mazes and unnatural inversions of the German potentates upon the other. With the latter he had evidently no sympathy. He believed that when harmony took the place of melody it should be upon the stage and not in the orchestra—that to conduct the motive-ideas of a piece by instrumental expression rather than by vocal, was to abandon the operatic for the symphonic; in effect, to accomplish the suicide of art. The canon of orchestral perfection is that the instruments should aid the voices to the utmost, without overcoming, much less extinguishing, them. This canon he never violated.

A devotee of beauty and order, Donizetti never indulged in the spasmodic shrieks and discordant howls of the boaster of Bayreuth. We cannot agree with those who condemn his freer use of recitative than Rossini. Recitative is a compromise between melody and colloquy, and is, indeed, essential to the completeness of operatic art. When properly constructed, it makes the dialogue musical without diminishing either its verbal significance or naturalness. Musical intonation need neither interfere with propriety of gesture, facial expression, precision of utterance, nor dramatic action. If any of these are wanting, that is attributable to the weakness of the artist, not the incapacity of the art. It has been truly said of the recitatives of Rossini that "their eloquence is equal to that of the most beautiful airs, with which the spectator is equally charmed and surprised." The criterion of excellence in

this, as in all other forms of musical expression, is that it should be appropriate to the character, sentiment, and situation. We are disposed to think that, upon the whole, Donizetti has adhered to this criterion with more rigidity than his exemplar. *Ex voluptate fides nascitur*. To us the intonation of dialogue in opera is much more agreeable than the tone of ordinary speech. And while the musical ideas of the Bergamite were symmetrical and clear, his dramatic power was great. He could direct the passions and emotions to any required situation, diminishing, suspending, or intensifying the interest with commanding skill, and exhibiting a familiarity with the phases of feeling very rarely surpassed. In one sense, indeed, he was more dramatic than Rossini, his demands on the singer being less, on the actor more—being less floridly vocal, he admitted more histrionic force.

In the course of his long and brilliant career, Donizetti composed between fifty and sixty operas, each one of them abounding in the characteristics of his style, and exhibiting the judgment "that softens all, and tempers into beauty." Though a prophet who had honour in his own country, he had greater profit if not greater honour elsewhere. There was a wide demand for his compositions. They delighted not only the professional and the amateur, but also the hearer of ordinary taste.

It must be admitted that the way was prepared for Donizetti by his brilliant and dauntless predecessor and contemporary. He had no professional antagonisms to overcome, no antiquated notions of indignant conservatives to detrude, no scientific errors to uproot, no novel system or improved method to discover—all was done to his hand. Beyond, the *dona nobis pacem* had been emphatically pronounced by the public, and the assaults of the elders and high priests of the old dispensation effectually suppressed. While Rossini waded so long and painfully in the troubled waters of the Stygian stream, Donizetti crossed it at once, his merits having been fully recognised upon the appearance of his first production, while his popularity increased with his assiduous culture and more daring transpositional flights, till it attained its brilliant consummation with his "Lucia," "Pasquale," and "Lucrezia," the splendid fruitage of his prime. Nor has his popularity sensibly declined. He looms upon us still lofty and imposing as a Himalayan peak, bright and expansive as the milky way, his clustering resplendent and sublime in the ethereal strata of the sky. It was when encrowned with a full-blown wreath of honour and blest with the conviction of an immortal renown that the waves of care and sorrow began to roll heavily over the great Italian. A fate even worse than death befel

him who had so long awayed the rod of empire over so many minds in every region of the world of art. The fiend of darkness imprisoned his soul. He ceased to know others or himself. His lucid judgment failed to maintain unequal war with his wildly vagarious fancy. Upon his splendid faculties, so exquisitely framed to inhale celestial melodies, the light of reason shone no more. His night of anguish was long. Hope indeed, occasionally inspired his friends, but the faithless syren was false, and the fell destroyer triumphed at last. He has taken his place among the eternal stars in his own heaven of song. That his transit was not so sweetly serene as we could have wished for one who had so often cast the spell of beauty over the minds and hearts of his race, will ever be regretted by the appreciators of his art.—*St. Cecilia Magazine*.

### Humour in Music.

SOMEbody has said that there is no laughter in music—that it is a sad art. There seems to be a common impression of this sort among people, which I think has no foundation in fact. Music is not a sad art; it is one of the most cheerful, perhaps, taken in all, the happiest of the arts. Its means of expression are extremely versatile, and it would be strange indeed if one of the most characteristic features of the human mind, mirth, were to have no place among them. But the objector will say, How can music express, by itself, pleasantry? It has no language for the whimsical, the laughable, the grotesque. If it expresses such thought at all it must be through the auxiliary medium of language. There is laughter in song, to be sure, but the mirth is in the language, not the music. Most people, I doubt not, if the question were set before them, would answer it be these very objections. Let us look into the matter a little, and see how they arise, and whether they are valid objections.

The general misapprehension with regard to the limitations of music in this direction, I apprehend to have come from a lack of insight on the part of music lovers, and musicians generally, into the capacities of the art itself. I do not believe that the art of musical expression is yet fully understood. It is made by far too subsidiary in its methods. It does not stand on its own merits. Its present condition reminds me of that embryotic state of the art of drawing, in which the imaginative amateur is obliged to place beneath the creation of his pencil, "This is a house"; or



"This is a man." There are musical compositions in which the groping lack of faith of the author has to be characterised in the same way. The musician does not understand the capacities of his art. So it comes to pass that larger part of the imaginative compositions called "themes" are as unintelligible to the player and the hearer—and, for that matter, to the writer—as the ambiguous box-house of the boy artist. The composer does not really believe that he can represent the running of brooks, the singing of birds, a thought, a motion, a dialogue, a reverie, and consequently, although he heads his tentative with some such theme, no one would be able to replace it, should the title of the piece in any way be lost. This lack of appreciation of the capacities of music as an art of expression comes partly from deficient study and partly from the evil effect of custom. Very few of our modern composers have anything more than a surface knowledge of music—a certain facility which enables them to be brilliant without being misunderstood. They have yielded to, and established, a custom of superficiality. The class to which they appeal is not a critical one. It is a class which is satisfied with the shallowest of themes, if they only afford an opportunity of technical brilliancy. Thus the foundation principles of the art of music, the springs which feed the immortal stream, are seldom reached by the student of to-day. This is one cause of that ignorance which professes to know nothing of the mirthful element in music. It may be there, but there is not enough of the insight of earnestness, of faith, on the part of the musician to determine whether it is or not.

Now, the only way to find out whether there is a humorous element in music, is to study music in connection with native humour—to apply the one to the other, and note whether their relations are common. Those who have not done this, or who have no knowledge of its being done by others, are not qualified to make the objections which we have previously noticed. How do they know that music has no language for the laughable and the grotesque, if they are not aware of its ever having been tested in this respect, save through the auxiliary medium of language? I claim that no one is competent to pronounce upon the limitation of music until he has thoroughly investigated its capacities. That music should be lacking in the element of humour, is an entirely gratuitous, besides improbable, supposition. Everything in the nature and method of the art goes to prove the contrary. There is no method of expression to which the natural, untutored heart resorts so readily in all its emotions as that of music. There is nothing so sad as the dirge-like wail of the poor, bereaved peasant over the

bier of the dead, and nothing is more spontaneously glad than the song of the rough-handed milk-maid, or the whistle of the ploughboy as he hastens afield in the early morning. Music is the most natural expression of the human heart in all moods. How, then, shall it lack the element of humour? It lacks it only in the sense that it has not become familiar in that quality to the ear of the people. The true musician is not altogether ignorant of musical humour, though he disregards it. A certain air may fit a certain ludicrous jingle of words in a comic opera and yet not be suitable to join with them. Why? Because it lacks that fine element of *musical humour* which is perceptible to the composer's art, and commends itself to his sense of fitness. For my part—though I have no claim but that of instinct to found it upon—I may truthfully say that I have, at times, while listening to music without words, a sense of its quality of humour. Some passages move me irresistibly to a smile—not from the manner of their rendition, but from certain inherent whimsicality in them which strikes me humourously. I recall them with an odd pleasure, and often, in moments of dejection, find them the surest cure for gloomy thoughts. It is of the nature of a recognition, almost of whimsical mirth-provoking thought in the mind of the composer as he wrote. The art of music, in my interpretation of it, does admit of humour; but I am not competent to say how this element may be utilized. I have no doubt, however, that in the future there will be musicians capable of employing it with certain and excellent effect. We shall have comedies and burlesque yet, as we have songs, *on he wrote*.—*Church's Musical Visitor*.

### Chefs-D'Orchestre.

FROM the moment a conductor first wields his *baton* for the overture, he is in the position of a general who leads his troops into battle, and not until the final accords have been sounded can it be said that the leadership has gained an Austerlitz or has lost a Waterloo. Victory, promising at first, may turn in the end to defeat, and there are many laggard Grouchys in the orchestra who fail to respond to the leader's call, and by their incompetence bring disaster. It is his duty—and a more arduous one it is difficult to imagine—to radically blend the various elements and natures of the instrumentalists under his control, and either by will, study, or personal magnetism, coalesce their virtues and temper their

errors, which should all be known to him. Allowing that he is passionately full of the beauties of the work he is about to interpret, and able to grasp all its possibilities, he must be almost omniscient, and have—which few do—an inherent respect, if not love, for the work under his care, and must assimilate with, and become a portion of, the creator's thought as far as his nature will allow. If that nature is sensitive, if he adores his art, if he is refined, and if, in a word, he has *soul*, which is as vital to success as it is rare to find, he, strong, sincere, calm, and confident, will conquer all difficulties, overcome all obstacles, give light and colour when needed, infuse warmth among his musicians, command by sheer strength of a developed mind, and finally achieve artistic success by purely intellectual or magnetic means; then the nervous shock may come, or prostration, but worthily will he have fulfilled his task, and his reward is great.—*New York Musical Critic.*

### The Passion Play at Nice.

THE account of the performance of the Passion Play at Nice jars greatly with the feelings which obtain over such solemn subjects in England. The practice of giving at Easter a dramatic representation of the last scenes of our Saviour's life is a very ancient one, and in old times it was not without its uses. But to give a performance of these holy mysteries in a modern theatre with a grand orchestra, stage decorations, and the electric light pressed into service to illuminate the figure on the cross, seems singularly incongruous, when we remember the simplicity which surrounded the inception of Christianity. The old mysteries were played in the open air without foot-lights or scenery of any kind, and their simple idealism probably strengthened men's faith far more than all the realism of the modern stage-art can ever do. The behaviour of the audience, and their applause and laughter, hardly affords surprise to those who are painfully aware that most of the modern Italians are devoid of any religious sentiment whatever. But musicians, who remember that oratorio had its origin in Italy, and can recall the noble works of PALESTRINA, LEO, DURANTE, VITTORIA, and other great composers that that gifted land has produced, cannot but experience a painful shock to learn that the music played during the progress of the sacred drama, given on Good Friday last, consisted of Suppé's overture to "The Poet and Peasant," which introduced the representation, dance music being played between the

tableaux, the agony in the garden of Gethsemane being preceded by the "Fleur de Noblesse" waltz.—*Musical Standard.*

### MONTHLY NOTES.

THE cognomen of "Jupiter" appears to have been assigned to Mozart's superb Symphony in C about the year 1820, in consequence of the observation of a well-known orchestral performer of that date, that the majestic work was worthy of such a special title.

An influential committee has been formed to collect subscriptions among the friends and well-wishers of Sir George J. Elvey, Mus. Doc., with a view to present him with his portrait upon his retirement from the profession of music, after nearly half a century of active and valued services, which indeed have been of a very distinguished character in various departments of the art. The co-operation of all who are likely to feel an interest in a movement which has for its object the recognition of public services so eminent, and extending over so unusually long a period of time, is invited. Communications may be addressed to the Rev. R. Tahourdin, The Cloisters, Windsor Castle, who is the Hon. Sec. The list of subscribers already includes the Royal Princes, many members of the aristocracy and musical profession.

The Bloomsbury Church Choir Union is the title of a new association formed by the choir of that important section of mid-London. The objects of the society are the cultivation and development of high-class church music, and the careful, earnest endeavour to secure the fitting and devotional rendering of service music in all its departments. The combined choir meet in the different churches by turns, and propose to hold a choral festival each year, between Easter and Whitsuntide. The local clergy are the society's vice-presidents, and a strong committee of management has been formed, consisting of the different church organists and representatives from the various choirs forming the "Union." Mr. C. H. Mason, of Broad Street, W.C., is the honorary secretary of the association. Such a society deserves earnest sympathy and support, for the proposal to zealously cultivate the proper and artistic rendering of the best church music is surely one of the highest stand-points any musical body can claim as the object of an existence.

I believe I was one of the very first teachers to take up the Letter-note method in the country, and certainly can claim to be the first to teach the system in the Midlands; and now, after 20 years' experience, am able to say I am more than ever convinced that it is by far the best method of teaching to sing at sight. It embodies all the best points of the Sol-fa method, and from the earliest stages pupils are accustomed to sing from the universal notation.

*Erdington, Birmingham, May 21st, 1880.*

THOMAS G. LOCKER,

*Conductor of Perry Barr Choral Society, Sutton Coldfield Philharmonic Society  
Camphill Amateur Musical Society, Birmingham Musical Union, etc.*

I have much pleasure in stating that I have used the Letter-note method for 10 years in Schools and Collegiate Seminaries, giving an average of 20 lessons per week, and after trying most other systems I am quite convinced the Letter-note is decidedly the best. The text-books are systematic and thorough; my pupils are very much interested in their lessons, make rapid progress, and soon learn to sing at sight from the established Notation. I have a large number of letters from Principals of Schools, expressing themselves highly pleased with the Letter-note method.

*The Park, Tottenham, London, Nov. 2nd, 1880.*

JOHN ADLEY.

I cordially welcome any measures that may facilitate the reading of Choral Music by the masses, and am of opinion that the Letter-note method is well calculated to that end. It combines the principles of the ordinary Tonic Sol-fa system with those of the Staff notation, and disposes of some of the objections which have been urged against the former.

*London, Nov. 6th, 1880.*

CHARLES E. STEPHENS, *Hon. Mem. R.A.M.*

With pleasure I testify that the specimens of the Letter-note method obligingly forwarded are clear, practical and useful. The method has too a special value, as standing in an explanatory attitude between the Stave notation and Tonic Sol-fa method, and so being of assistance to students of either principle.

*London, Nov. 10th, 1880.*

E. H. TURPIN,

*Hon. Sec. and Member of Board of Examiners, College of Organists,  
Examiner, College of Preceptors; etc.*

I am sure your system is an additional facility to the teaching of sight-singing.

*London, Nov. 17th, 1880.*

EDWIN M. LOTT,

*Visiting Examiner, International College of Music, London.*

I am happy to say I think the Letter-note system is likely to be of great benefit to the Choral Societies and Classes in which I am introducing it. I can give no better testimonial than the fact of my having adopted it everywhere.

*Dollar, Dec. 15th, 1880.*

JAMES M'HARDY.

I have much pleasure in stating that the Letter-note method has been adopted by a Class in Birmingham of nearly 200 members, of which I am the Teacher, and I consider the method excellent.

*Birmingham, Dec. 16th, 1880.*

ALFRED R. GAUL, *Mus. Bac. Cantab.,*

*Professor of Harmony and Singing at the Midland Institute.*

Your system, I feel quite sure, is an admirable one.

*Birmingham, January 3rd, 1881.*

C. SWINNERTON HEAP, *Mus. Doc. Cantab.,*

*Conductor of the Birmingham, Stoke-on-Trent,  
Walsall, Stafford, and Stone Philharmonic Societies.*

The undermentioned gentlemen have kindly signified their approval of the method in the following terms:—

"We are quite of opinion that the Letter-note Method is well calculated to produce good results in training to sing at sight."

W. S. BAMBRIDGE, Esq., *Mus. Bac. Oxon., Professor of Music at Marlborough College.*

EDMUND T. CHIPP, Esq., *Mus. Doc. Cantab., Organist of Ely Cathedral.*

SIR GEORGE J. ELVEY, *Mus. Doc. Oxon., Organist of Her Majesty's Chapel, Windsor.*

WILLIAM LEMARE, Esq., *Organist and Director of the Choir of St. Mary, Newington, and Conductor of the Brixton Choral Society, London.*

REV. SIR F. A. G. OUSELEY, Bart., *Mus. Doc. Oxon., Professor of Music at Oxford University.*

BRINLEY RICHARDS, Esq., *M.R.A.M., London.*

J. GORDON SAUNDERS, Esq., *Mus. Doc. Oxon., Professor of Harmony at Trinity College, London.*


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HUMPHREY J. STARK, Esq., *Mus. Bac. Oxon., Professor of Counterpoint at Trinity College, London.*

SIR ROBERT STEWART, *Mus. Doc., University Professor of Music at Dublin.*

## THE LETTER-NOTE METHOD.



ETTER-NOTE appends to the ordinary staff notation the sol-fa initials, on a principle identical with that adopted in former years by Waite's figure method, and at the present time by the Tonic Sol-fa and Chev  methods. Experience has shown that as sight-singing pupils have to undergo two distinct processes—1st, that of cultivating the faculty of tune, and training the ear to recognise the tonality of the sounds; and 2nd, of acquiring a practical acquaintance with the symbols and characters used in musical notation—it is expedient to give the learner some educational aid in acquiring the former while the latter is being studied. Accordingly most of the methods in use at the present time either discard the staff altogether, or else add thereto during the earlier stages certain contrivances for the help of the pupil; the latter is the plan adopted and advocated by Letter-note.

The advantages claimed for Letter-note are, that the power of reading music thus printed is acquired by young pupils quite as easily as either of the new notations; and, once this degree of proficiency is attained, a very slight effort is needed in order to dispense with the aid of the sol-fa initials—so slight, in fact, that young persons often accomplish it of their own accord, without help from their teacher. Further, the notation learned first is that which is likely to remain most familiar and easy, simply because it is learned first; and Letter-note secures the advantage that the student uses the staff-notation from the very commencement of his reading lessons.

The following specimens will show the nature of Letter-note:—



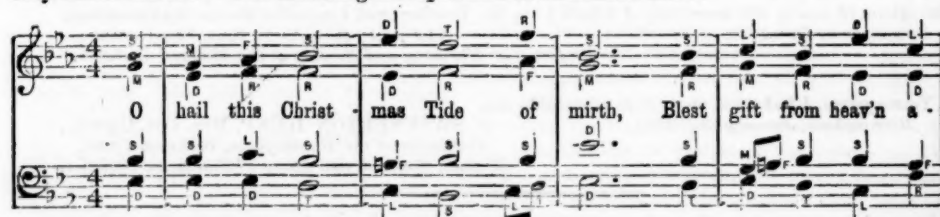
God save our gra-cious Queen, Long live our no-ble Queen, God save the



Queen.    Send   her   vic - to - ri - ous,   Hap - py   and   glo - ri - ous,

The above are the modes of printing adopted at the commencement, at which stage the pupil needs bold and legible symbols and initial letters.

After progress has been made, when the reader is able to depend more upon the notes and uses the letter only when he is in doubt, it is found possible to reduce the size of type, and also to print the music in condensed score, without inconvenience through the multiplicity of signs—an arrangement which renders Letter-note music “as cheap as the cheapest, and as easy as the easiest.” The following is a specimen of condensed score:—



These advantages, together with a very careful graduation of the lessons, will, it is hoped, render the elementary text-books useful to all engaged in the work of music-teaching. At present these training-books are well and favourably known in many of the better class seminaries of the Metropolis; the method is also extensively used in evening classes at Birmingham and other large towns.

For the guidance of teachers in making their selections, it is expedient to explain that Letter-note works adopt two distinct methods of teaching, and may be classified thus:—

The Letter-note Singing Method and Choral Guide The Junior Course The Choral Primer The Penny Educators	Letter-note School Music.	In these works every note throughout carries its sol-fa initial, and they can be used by the very youngest pupil.
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The Graduated Course and Pupil's Handbook } The Sol-fa initials are here gradually  
The Elementary Singing Master and Elementary } withdrawn, and these books can be used  
Singing School } to best advantage by senior scholars or  
adults.

London: F. Pitman, 20, Paternoster Row. Edinburgh: Johnstone, Hunter & Co.

